




**National Rural Electric  
Cooperative Association**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Glenn English  
Chief Executive Officer

June 19, 2012

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), I write to express support for S.3240, the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012, which recently passed the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry and is currently being considered by the Senate. I would also like to thank Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Roberts for their leadership on agriculture and rural development policy, and appreciate their efforts to ensure that critical advancements are made in rural America.

NRECA is the national service organization representing over 900 not-for-profit, member-owned, rural electric cooperative systems, which serve 42 million customers in 47 states. NRECA estimates that cooperatives own and maintain 2.5 million miles or 42 percent of the nation's electric distribution lines covering three-quarters of the nation's landmass. Cooperatives serve approximately 18 million businesses, homes, farms, schools and other establishments in 2,500 of the nation's 3,141 counties.

Importantly, the Farm Bill makes enhancements to Rural Development programs, including the authorization of the Rural Energy Savings Program Act (RESPA) that would drive investments in energy efficiency in rural areas by providing rural electric cooperative members access to low-interest loans through USDA's Rural Utilities Service (RUS). Through these loans, rural consumers will be able to make affordable upgrades to their homes and small businesses, and will ultimately conserve energy and save money on their electric bills. NRECA appreciates the Senate Agriculture Committee's recognition that energy efficiency improvements can help lower electricity costs, while conserving energy and creating jobs.

RUS also provides essential assistance to rural communities which continue to lack adequate access to broadband services. NRECA appreciates the Committee's support for the RUS broadband loan program and the new language which strengthens the program by adding a grant component. NRECA opposes any efforts to make this program more costly or burdensome for cooperatives to use in bringing broadband to rural America. Bridging the digital divide is critical in bringing economic recovery to all Americans.

In addition, because rural development programs serve as economic engines for rural America, NRECA would like to see mandatory funding for key programs in the Rural Development title of the Farm Bill.

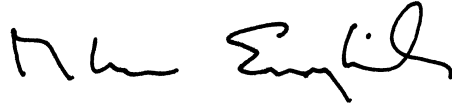
NRECA supports S.A. 2299 from Senator Klobuchar addressing a study of rail transportation in rural America.

NRECA is opposed to a number of the amendments considered in the unanimous consent agreement governing debate. Specifically, I urge you to oppose the following

Amendments to S. 3240: SA. 2191 from Senator Alexander regarding wind incentives, S.A. 2268 from Senator DeMint regarding loan guarantees, S.A. 2263 and S. 2273 from Senator DeMint, and S.A. 2457 from Senator Warner all regarding broadband policy.

NRECA urges the Senate to pass the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012. NRECA looks forward to continuing work with the Senate Agriculture Committee and members of the Senate on the advancement of rural communities through the reauthorization of the Farm Bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glenn English". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Glenn" and the last name "English" clearly distinguishable.

Glenn English